

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO CINCPACREP GUAM/TTPI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 081015

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,TQ

SUBJECT: PLEBISCITE ON COVENANT TO ESTABLISH COMMONWEALTH

- IN THE MARIANA ISLANDS DISTRICT AND STATUS LNO
- RESPONSIBILITIES RELEVANT THERETO

PASS TO STATUS LNO BERGESEN SAIPAN FROM AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS

A. STATUS LNO 63C (CINCPACREP GUAM/TTPI 020400Z APR 75)

1. AN ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, SUBJ: "PLEBISCITE IN THE MARIANA ISLANDS DISTRICT" SLATED TO BE ISSUED APR 10 WILL ESTABLISH THE AUTHORITY AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOLDING PLEBISCITE IN MARIANAS ON JUNE 17 AND NAME PRESIDENTIALLY DESIGNATED PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER.

2. PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER WILL HAVE OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONDUCT OF A FAIR AND IMPARTIAL PLEBISCITE EDUCATION PROGRAM MAKING AVAILABLE TO ALL VOTERS THE RELEVANT DOCUMENTS AND FACTS WITHOUT COLORATION OF ADVOCACY OR OPPOSITION. RESPONSIBILITY INCLUDES PROVIDING ACCESS TO SUCH INFORMATION THROUGH DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS, MEDIA AND USAGE AND OTHER FACILITIES FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION. ALTHOUGH THE TT ADMINISTRATION WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND LOGISTIC SUPPORT, YOU SHOULD DO WHATEVER

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IS APPROPRIATE TO ASSIST THE PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER.

3. WITH REGARD TO THE SUBSTANTIVE STATUS ISSUE, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT POSITION IS THAT THE COMMONWEALTH SOLUTION AS EVOLVED DURING THE TWO AND ONE HALF YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE MPSC PROVIDES FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS THE SEPARATE, CLOSE AND ENDURING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. WHICH THEY HAVE REPEATEDLY SOUGHT. NEVERTHELESS AS ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO OVERSEE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM AND PLEBISCITE WHICH WILL BE CLEAR AND IMPARTIAL AND OPEN FOR THE WORLD TO WITNESS.

4. ROLE OF THE STATUS LNO. OVER THE NEXT TWO TO THREE MONTHS YOUR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IS IN CONNECTION WITH THE MARIANAS PLEBISCITE. BEARING IN MIND THE POINTS IN PARAGRAPH 3 ABOVE, YOU SHOULD:

- A. BECOME THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH EVERY ASPECT OF THE COVENANT AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS AND BE PREPARED TO RENDER (OR SEEK VIA OMSN) A DEFINITIVE OPINION ON ANY POINT OF INTERPRETATION. YOU SHOULD NOT HESITATE TO CORRECT FACTUAL ERRORS PUBLICLY AS NECESSARY WHENEVER THEY OCCUR.
- B. BE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST TO EXPLAIN THE PROVISIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE COVENANT AND THE COMMONWEALTH ARRANGEMENT WHICH IT DEFINES, REMAINING IMPARTIAL AND AUTHORITATIVE AS TO INFORMATION. YOU SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT YOU ARE GIVING FACTS, NOT OPINION OR INTERPRETATION.
- C. REPORT REGULARLY ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS, ATTITUDES AND PROSPECTS CONCERNING THE COVENANT, IDENTIFYING AREAS OF CONCERN, MISUNDERSTANDING OR OPPOSITION. SPECIFICALLY AS A MINIMUM PLEASE PROVIDE BY CABLE A WEEKLY STATUS REPORT SUMMARIZING ALL ASPECTS RELATED TO PLEBISCITE INCLUDING ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY ON MEDIA CONTACT AND COVERAGE--PRESS, RADIO, T.V.

5. ROLE OF ADVOCATE. THE MPSC WILL HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SELLING TO THEIR OWN PEOPLE THE COVENANT WHICH

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THEY HAVE SIGNED. YOUR REPORTS INDICATE THAT THEY HAVE BEGUN THIS WORK THROUGH MEETINGS, DISCUSSIONS, PUBLICATION OF A NEWSLETTER, ETC. WE NEED TO BE KEPT CURRENT ON THEIR ACTIVITY.

6. ROLE OF OPPONENT. LOCAL OPPONENTS OF THE COVENANT ARE FAIRLY WELL IDENTIFIED. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THEY MAY BE

ABETTED BY THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA AND PERHAPS SUPPORTED BY OUTSIDE--AND INSIDE--INTERESTS. YOU SHOULD KEEP ALERT TO THE COURSE OF THEIR CAMPAIGN. PLEASE FOLLOW THIS SUBJECT AND INCLUDE IT IN YOUR REPORTING.

7. INSTRUCTIONS BEING SENT HICOM ADDRESS OTHER QUESTIONS RAISED REFTEL.

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